



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Confirmed Report

## **NEW SCHOOL ASSURANCE REVIEW REPORT**

### **Te Ao Mārama School**

Location: Hamilton

Ministry of Education profile number: 780

March 2021

# New School Assurance Review Report

## Te Ao Mārama School

### 1 Introduction

A New School Assurance Review is a review of particular areas of school performance and is undertaken to specific terms of reference.

New School Assurance Reviews are generally undertaken within the first year of the school's opening.

#### Terms of Reference

This review is based on an evaluation of the performance of Te Ao Mārama. The terms of reference for the review are to provide assurance to the community:

- that the school is well placed to provide for children
- that the school is operating in accordance with the vision articulated by the board of trustees.

### 2 Context

Te Ao Mārama opened in February 2019 and is situated on a new site in the rapidly growing Hamilton suburb of Flagstaff, Rototuna. A respectful, reciprocal relationship with mana whenua, Ngāti Wairere, has been an integral part of the school's establishment and subsequent development.

### 3 Background

The school caters for 360 children in Years 1 to 6 from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Rapid growth of student numbers has occurred at all year levels since the school opened. The very diverse roll includes 17% who identify as Māori, 23% NZ European, 18% Chinese and 15% Indian.

The school whakataukī, [Whiria te tāngata](#) (Weave the people together) is highly visible in school documentation and throughout the environment. Establishing meaningful relationships, as expressed in the whakataukī, is prioritised. The relationship-based approach to learning is focused on individual learners. The defined vision to 'inspire, challenge and empower learners to create tomorrow today' underlies school systems and practices.

The establishment board (appointed in 2017) and elected board of trustees (elected in July 2019) have provided the necessary framework and scrutiny for effective governance that promotes student wellbeing and success. The boards have overseen the development of an environment that cater for up to 560 children. The next building development is in the design phase and will provide capacity for 850 learners.

## 4 Findings

A positive student-centred learning environment is well established, based on the collaboratively developed school vision, values and learning principles. A strong focus is on developing, sustaining and further promoting a school culture that is highly supportive of wellbeing and learning.

Literacy and mathematics data collected by the school indicates that in 2020 most learners achieved at or above expectation for their year level. Children needing to accelerate their learning are well supported and their progress is closely monitored. School-wide achievement information is collated, analysed and shared with the board of trustees and parents.

The central driver for successful outcomes is a culture based on reciprocal relationships within the school and with external stakeholders. A range of inclusive practices effectively support children's belonging and wellbeing. Very high levels of overall attendance and regularly collected student feedback affirm the positive culture that is in place.

The board is operating effectively with suitable interface between governance and management, appropriate structures and suitable delegations. An online portfolio of policies and procedures reflecting the school context is in place. The board's capability is built by ongoing review of its own practices. Whole board training in 2020, linked to the governance role, further clarified and strengthened practices. To support greater scrutiny of teaching and learning support programmes, progress of target learners should be shared more frequently with trustees by senior leaders.

Strategic planning, reporting and processes for self review are well established. Strategic goals are clearly identified and align with the vision, values and government learning priorities. Future school direction is focused on:

- developing highly responsive teaching and learning programmes that promote equity and excellence
- creating a positive learning culture through developing powerful partnerships with parents, children, staff, community and other stakeholders
- developing and implementing systems and infrastructure that allow for future growth and sustainability.

Measurable outcomes for children should be integrated more into annual planning to strengthen evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of curriculum and interventions.

School-wide value placed on tikanga and te reo Māori positively contributes to Māori success and the overall school culture. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is evident through strategic documents, curriculum and everyday practices. Whānau knowledge and expertise is actively sought and respected. Strong connections to and collaboration with Ngāti Wairere, including through Hukanui Marae have been sustained.

A range of needs-based interventions support learners with additional needs. English second language learners are a significant part of this group. The board provides resourcing to ensure additional programmes are available to those who require these. Learning support staff work closely with teachers to assist learners to accelerate their progress, particularly in literacy.

Purposeful teacher inquiry and knowledge building successfully contribute to teacher improvement and building of leadership capability. Regular revisiting of expectations for learning contribute to consistently high quality teaching and shared responsibility for student progress. Strong, educationally focused relationships have been established with other education and community groups to increase opportunities for student learning.

The school's curriculum and teaching effectively support student wellbeing, engagement and learning. Flexible, collaborative and well-resourced learning spaces support authentic and purposeful learning. Children's exploration and creativity is actively encouraged. Te reo, tikanga and diverse cultural experiences are successfully integrated within programmes. Children work collaboratively with each other and make informed choices about their own learning priorities. Daily *Whānau Time* promotes belonging, relationships (including with whānau), wellbeing, social and interpersonal skills.

Systems and expectations for assessing student achievement and reporting to parents continue to be developed. Assessment practices across the school are regularly reviewed to ensure they contribute effectively to consistent and dependable teacher judgements about achievement and progress.

Parents receive regular information about children's learning. Reporting includes learning stories that link to school values and children's progress and achievement in a range of learning areas. Well attended Hui-a-Whānau are student led. The school should seek parent feedback on how well they believe progress is shared and the extent to which they are enabled to contribute to their children's learning.

During the period when COVID-19 has affected the wider community, the school has benefitted from well-established communication systems and relationships established with the parent community. Purposeful home-based learning opportunities made available to students have successfully maintained engagement in learning during periods when on-site schooling has been unavailable.

#### **Board assurance on legal requirements**

Before the review, the board and principal of the school completed the *ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- school management and reporting
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of children (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of children
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

## 5 Other Matters

### Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* established under section 534 of the Education and Training Act 2020. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code and has completed an annual self review of its implementation of the Code.

At the time of this review there was one international student attending the school.

The school has effective systems in place to review and continue to improve the quality of education for international students and their participation in the school community.

### Conclusion

Te Ao Mārama has established a school culture highly supportive of students' wellbeing and learning. The collaborative and supportive environment established promotes children's belonging, learning and progress. Processes in place effectively enable sustainability and improvement.

The school will now move into the ERO's School Evaluation for Improvement approach alongside an evaluation partner.



Phil Cowie  
Director Review and Improvement Services  
Central Region - Te Tai Pūtahi Nui

## About the School

[The Education Counts website provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement.](#)